1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
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Special song.

"There is a special song belonging to this pilgrimage and to the voyage there and back; but it is kept secret, on pain of death." Godefroy relates that one day, when the young men of Wala had just come back from their initiation on Oba, one of their elders, while resting one afternoon in his house, was surprised by his wife in the act of singing over to himself the sacred Oba song, with the result that she immediately began to embrace him, begging him to sing over to her this chant unknown to the uninitiated and above all to women. "He was unable to resist, and was seduced into betraying the famous Oba song. While he was singing it, however, two youths who happened to be sleeping beneath the gable of a near-by house woke up, and naturally overheard the stanzas of the forbidden song. Horrified, they rose up and fled as fast as their legs would carry them to the *ghamal*, where they told of the wretched man's crime. That night, there was a debate followed by judgment. The culprit saved himself by fleeing, with his wife, in a canoe and lived for many years in exile. Eventually he managed to come back, but not without sacrifice of several large tuskers, which was an expensive business." [1]

I do not know what this special song is. The youths from Atchin learn many songs when on Oba. Those are of two kinds: (*a*) these called "Oba Men's Songs" which are sung also during the Maki and mortuary rites, usually in connexion with canoes and tusked boars, and (*b*) special love-songs called in Atchin *nu-mbo tamar*, examples of which will be given in a future volume.

Appeal to ancestors for fair weather for a safe return.

Godefroy gives a dramatic instance of the special care the ancestors are held to exercise over this expedition. Note that in this instance it is the ancestors who are appealed to direct, through song and sacrifice, in marked contrast to the ordinary weather magic done privately by individual practitioners.

"About four years ago [i.e. about 1928] the young men of the villages of Pete-hul and Togh-vanu undertook their pilgrimage to Oba. On the Seventh Day after their departure the trade wind was blowing with such violence that there appeared to be no hope of them returning on the appointed day, the date of a great feast to be held in honour of their pilgrimage. That evening, at their daily debate, the elders reminded the young men who had stayed at home that in their young days several sea-going canoes had foundered with their crews in a similar high wind on account of the tidal wave produced by a change in the direction of the current. The old men then ordered the immediate sacrifice of several pigs and the formation of a procession to that spot on the beach from which

[1] Godefroy, 1, 1933, pp. 233-4.